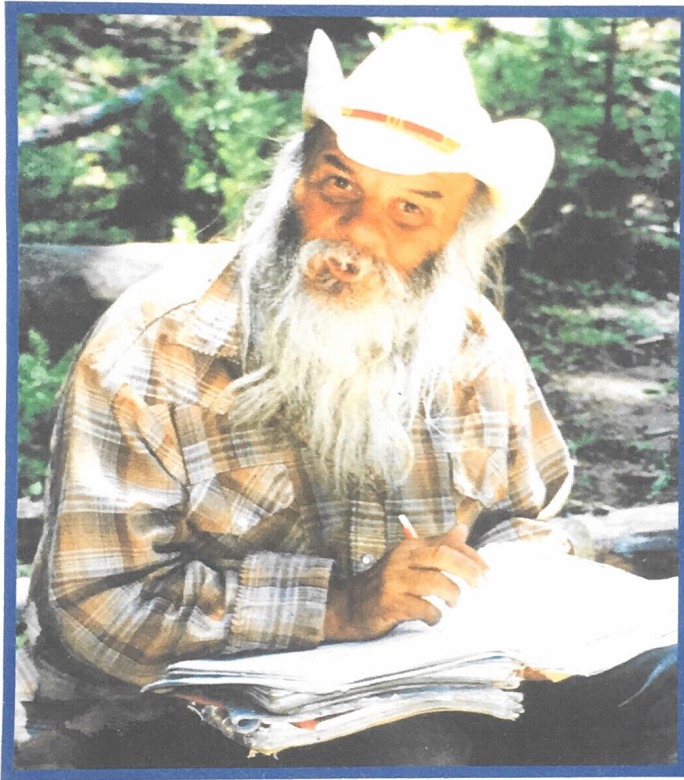


Rainbow Family

Life Stories



*by Jodey Bateman.
Interviews with Rainbow
Family of Living Light
folks conducted between
1977 and 2008.
Scanned in 2018.
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contacted on Facebook.*

04. JODEY - "The Origins"

"The first section of Life Stories
is from people who were part of
Rainbow before the first Gathering"

The Origins

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This first section of life stories is from people who were part of Rainbow before the first gathering. One thing that is most striking about many of those who were in the early days of Rainbow - and many who have become involved in Rainbow later - is their social origin. According to many social scientists, the hippie movement was mostly upper middle class youth. Yet Barry, who was a well-known part of the Haight-Ashbury scene, and Chuck Windson and Michael Bear - core people of the group that became Rainbow are all of working class background. Sunny, a leading figure in putting together the health care for the gatherings and parent of two children with Barry, is also of working class background. So is Bo of the Hog Farm who did some unpublicized work in helping find a spot for the first gathering.

On the other hand, Garrick was from well-to-do (though avant-garde) parents who founded the Living Theater in 1948. The Living Theater gave Beat writers a place to have their works performed and a social center. Thus it was one of the major roots of the counter-culture. The Temple Tribe of crafts people that Garrick was in at the time he met Barry seem to have been, like Garrick, mostly dropouts from college, finding the college fringe life more exciting - and as Garrick would say, more just and more relevant - than the college.

Jean Vision, who did work on the first gathering, was in the Love Family. Like most Love Family members, she is from the upper middle class background that social scientists think was usual for the early hippies. Phil Coyote who inspired her to get involved with Rainbow, is from a once-wealthy family who were ruined in the Depression. He was a classic late sixties-early seventies runaway who became involved with the STP Family, who are almost all from working class backgrounds.

The reason for this discussion of social class is to show the changes that had occurred in American society by the Sixties that made the counter-culture possible. Although Barry was raised in

poverty, he had, like millions in poverty in the Fifties and sixties, an access to education that no previous generation of his family had. Barry's cousin, Chuck Windsor, although he got only as far as the eighth grade, had an access to metaphysical books and teachers that was rare for people like him before World War II. Before World War II it was also rare for working class people - especially women - to get to go to college like Sunny. And the college leftist scene she was in hardly existed until the sixties. (Only one person in this section, Michael Bear, is from a traditional left-wing working class background.)

Up till the Sixties, people like Garrick's parents could reach only a relatively small audience with their avant-garde theater and their radical pacifism. Now, because of the changes that created the counter-culture as a major audience, great numbers of people have seen the theatrical concepts and political concepts of Garrick's parents as carried out by others - like the San Francisco Mime Troupe.

Without the huge rise of working class living standards and educational levels, people like Barry and Sunny and Chuck and Michael Bear would have probably never gotten to know people like Garrick. Sunny and Jean Vision would probably never have become friends and Phil Coyote would have not been acquainted with affluent youth like Jean and the other Love Family people. The blend that made Rainbow, the union of Barry's Marble Mount Outlaws and Garrick's Temple Tribe would not have been possible without the move towards equality that came with the fifties and sixties boom and brought many people of all social levels together.

Another striking feature - how many Rainbow people belonged to smaller families like the Marble Mount Outlaws and the Temple Tribe before finding Rainbow. There are many examples in this book.